FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
5-213	ORLEANS		EAS.83

Town/City: Town of Eastham

Place: *(neighborhood or village)*:
North Eastham

Address: 820 Massasoit Road

Historic Name: John & William Myrick House

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: 1837-40

Source: deeds, vital records, censuses

Style/Form: Greek Revival/Cape Cod

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:
Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard & wood shingle/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Garage (attached)

Major Alterations *(with dates)*:
Skylight added to south front roof, late 20th c.
Wing porch enclosed, mid-20th c.
Dormers on rear & garage, mid-20th c.

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.61

Setting: The property is situated on a historic highway leading north from North Eastham and is now part of a pattern of late-20th-century residential subdivisions.

Photograph

View from SW.

Locus Map (north at top)

Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson
Larson Fisher Associates

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: June 2020

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The John & William Myrich House, built ca. 1837, is a story-and-a-half wood frame single dwelling with a full Cape Cod plan with a wing. One piece of received history states the house was moved from "down the road." If true, there may be portions of John's and William's father's house (or another) within. However, the account does not refer to any physical characteristics reflecting an earlier construction date. One odd element is the double frieze along the eaves, perhaps a tell-tale sign of raising the roof; yet, this feature is also present on the wing, which is not likely to have been part of the moved house. It is also possible that these features, including pronounced cornices along the roof edge are the result of renovations made by Eva M. Nickerson, or her parents, Solomon and Mattie Snow, after they acquired the property in 1888. Eva M. Nickerson sold a parcel on the opposite side of the street, 845 Massasoit Road (EAS.84) to carpenter Jesse Brewer in 1908 who built a house of traditional design there; Brewer built a house of similar design at 945 Massasoit Road (EAS.85) around 1911. Brewer may have renovated the Myrick house at this time, which would explain the presence of some of these more modern features. Further analysis of interior construction features is needed to reconcile the inconsistencies. In contrast to the idiosyncratic friezes on the front facades of the house and wing, corner pilasters of Greek scale are missing. Characteristic sidelights and trabeated surround are also absent on the center doorway. Façade elements on the wing are hidden within an enclosed porch. The wing is recessed behind the front wall of the house and in line with its rear wall. A gabled dormer centered on the rear roof of the house was added, probably, for a bathroom in the mid-20th century. A shed dormer was raised on the rear roof of the wing sometime later. A one-story, one-car garage with a gable roof was built in 1965 with the short hyphen linking it to the rear of the wing.

The house is sited on the southwest corner of a small lot with a long street frontage; the principal (south) façade of the house is perpendicular to the street. A driveway enters near the center of the frontage in the vicinity of the garage. The northern part of the lot is open, the rest is wooded.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The house at 820 Massasoit Road was built on land owned by Isaac Myrick (ca. 1748-1829), a fourth-generation descendant of William Merrick/Myrick, who came from Duxbury to Eastham about 1652. The family, though considered "not numerous" on Cape Cod, nonetheless contained many named William: in the 1790 Eastham census there were three William Myricks as well as Isaac Myrick. One of the Williams was his father (1718-99), who had married Lydia Higgins of Eastham in 1741. The 1798 Federal Direct Tax listings for Eastham document that William Myrick, William Myrick Jr., and Isaac Myrick each owned a dwelling house. In 1810 Isaac Myrick, who married Mercy Doane (1749-1837) in 1769, was listed in a household of ten persons just before the household of William Myrick, probably his brother. Eastham birth records document that Isaac and Mercy Myrick had at least seven children—Jesse (1779-1872), Mercy (1781-1869), Harding (1783-1869), Sally (1787-1883), Isaac Jr. (1789-1859), William (1796-1882), and John (1798-1882). Isaac Myrick's will of 1820 also mentions a daughter Lydia, who had married Joseph Smith in Eastham in 1794. The will left to youngest son John, after the death of Isaac's wife Mercy, his "horse house at the meeting house," his dwelling, barn, outbuildings, orchard, and the cleared land adjoining the homestead with the proviso that John was to let his older sister Mercy live in the house as along as she remained single, which she always did. He also left John woodland and part of his livestock. He forgave his eldest son Jesse's debts, left his daughters Mercy and Sarah twenty-five dollars each and most of his personal estate, and willed the rest of his real property to his sons Jesse, Harding, Isaac, and William in equal shares.

Censuses show Mercy as part of the household of her brothers John and William until she died in 1869. It is not possible based on the evidence of the will and censuses to determine whether the brothers, in the same household until they each died in 1882, lived in their father's homestead, possibly dating to 1770, or in a household John might have built on land his father had owned that was transferred to him in three deeds. By about 1830 William's and John's three older brothers had all left Eastham, Harding for New Salem in Franklin County and Jesse and Isaac Jr. for the Shaker community in Harvard. Jesse and Elizabeth Knowles Myrick moved their entire family of seven children to the village, and all but one of them died there. In 1850 Jesse was a broom maker and Isaac a farmer in the Harvard community. In 1837 Harding and Isaac and Jessie's son Joseph M. (and in

one deed William) deeded more than nine acres to their brother John that had been part of their father's estate.[1] Still, from 1830 the Myrick siblings are consistently listed next to the household of Elisha Holbrook, who lived just to the north on the west side of Massasoit Road.

The 1840 census clearly shows John Myrick in this neighborhood in a household of three—two males between forty and forty-nine years old (no doubt himself and his brother William), and one female between fifty and fifty-nine years old (their older sister Mercy, then fifty-nine). In 1850 John Myrick was listed in the census as a farmer with $400 in real property in a household with his brother William, a mariner, and sister Mercy. The 1858 Eastham map shows only one house labeled "J. Myrick" on this site (though the 1880 map appears to show two), and in 1860 John was credited with $1300 in real property and his brother with $300.

In 1868, when he was nearly seventy years old, John Myrick married the sixty-two-year-old widow Charlania Doane Atwood, and in 1869 Mercy Myrick died. In 1880 John, Charlania, and William lived in the 820 Massasoit Road house with fifteen-year-old Betsey M. Knowles, listed as a granddaughter though she cannot have been; the next year she married Eastham fisherman Osgood W. Horton. In November 1881, in separate deeds, John and William Myrick deeded their homestead property to Horton in exchange for their care until they died, and in 1882 the brothers both died, John in May and William in October.[2] The son of Isaiah Higgins Horton and Rachel Witherell Horton, Osgood W. Horton (1857-1912) was a fisherman and lived in his parents' household in this part of North Eastham and probably did not live at 820 Massasoit Road. In 1888, when he sold it to Solomon Snow of South Wellfleet, the *Barnstable Patriot* described the property as "the homestead of the late John Myrick."[3]

Born in Wellfleet in 1840, Solomon Snow (1836-96) was the son of Nathaniel Snow of Wellfleet and Betsey Rich Lincoln of Eastham. He was a laborer and farmer, and in 1869 he married Mattie Brumley of Ellensburg, a town in extreme northeastern New York State. In 1884 the couple had a daughter, Eva M. Snow. Solomon Snow died in 1896, and in 1900 Mattie Snow was living at 820 Massasoit Road with her daughter Eva. Mattie Snow died on 3 January 1904, and thirteen days later Eva Snow married George A. Nickerson (1882-1953), a native of Wellfleet who then lived in Eastham. and worked as a shell fisherman. Eva Snow Nickerson died only five years later, of tuberculosis. The 820 Massasoit Road property passed to her husband, whose family owned it until 1963.

George Appleton Nickerson was the son of Wellfleet fish dealer and Eastham native Samuel Nickerson and Lucy Barnard of Welllfleet. The 1910 census shows him as a shell fisherman living on Massasoit Road with his only son, Bernard, born in 1907, and a housekeeper. In 1917 Nickerson married again, to Nellie Sanders of South Boston, and in 1920 the couple lived with son Bernard in Boston with income from five lodgers; the census described Nickerson as a part-time farmer. By 1929, though, the couple had returned to Massasoit Road, and the 1930 census credits Nickerson with $5,000 in real property in a household with their three children—Arthur C., George S., and Shirley N.—born between 1917 and 1922. By 1940 Nickerson was a gang boss on the public Cape Cod Mosquito Control project, and wife Nellie ran a general store; son Arthur was a mechanic and service station proprietor.[4]

George A. Nickerson died in 1953, and second wife Nellie died four years later. In 1963 their children sold their interest in 820 Massasoit Road to Robert J. and Elizabeth Ann Erickson and John B. and Ruth F. Curtiss, who together had bought numerous

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[1] Jesse Myrick was listed in Harvard censuses by 1830 and must have moved there with his family between the birth of son Elisha in 1826 and the time of the 1830 census. Eldest son Joseph M. Myrick (1805-49) was a cabinetmaker in the village; the other children who lived and died at Harvard were Susan K. (1809-49), Jesse Jr.(1810-37), Daniel (1815-68), Samuel (1821-52) and Elijah (1823-90), who was a trustee of the village at the time of his death. Isaac may have left the Shakers by the time he died in 1859; and Jesse's son Elisha, living in the village in 1850, had left by 1861, when he married in Chelsea. See Harding Myrick, New Salem; Isaac Myrick, Harvard; Joseph M Myrick, Harvard, to John Myrick, 14 April 1837, BCD 18:273; Harding Myrick, New Salem; Isaac Myrick, Harvard; Joseph M Myrick, Harvard; and William Myrick, Eastham, to John Myrick, 14 April 1837, BCD 18:272; Harding Myrick, New Salem; Isaac Myrick, Harvard; Joseph M Myrick, Harvard, to John Myrick, 14 April 1837, BCD 18:271.

[2] Harding Myrick, New Salem; Isaac Myrick, Harvard; Joseph M Myrick, Harvard, to John Myrick, 14 April 1837, BCD 18:271; William Myrick to Osgood W. Horton, November 1881, BCD 140:543.

[3] Osgood W. Horton to Solomon Snow, Wellfleet, 15 November 1888, BCD 181:37; "Eastham," *Barnstable Patriot*, 18 December 1888, 5.

[4] Between 1928 and the early 1940s, more than eleven thousand men were hired to dig more than three thousand miles of ditches to drain the Cape's salt marshes, partly to alleviate unemployment; the project resulted in a large increase in tourist trade. The project began as a county-wide effort and was later taken over by the state agriculture department's Division of Reclamation. See "History of Salt Marsh Management for Mosquito Control in Coastal Massachusetts" in Massachusetts Mosquito Control Open Marsh Water Management Standards (May 2010), Northeast+Massachusetts+Mosquito+Control%20(1).pdf.

Continuation sheet 2

tracts in town with an eye toward subdividing and developing them. In 1965 the house and a 0.61-acre parcel were sold to Edith G. Sanford of Darien, Connecticut, who owned it for almost a decade; Gordon L. Wright of Brewster acquired 820 Massasoit Road in 1979 and owned it wit his wife Carol until 2004. The owners of record in 2020, Scott W. Johnson and Renee McCabe of Boca Raton, Florida, acquired the property in 2007.[5]

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MAPS
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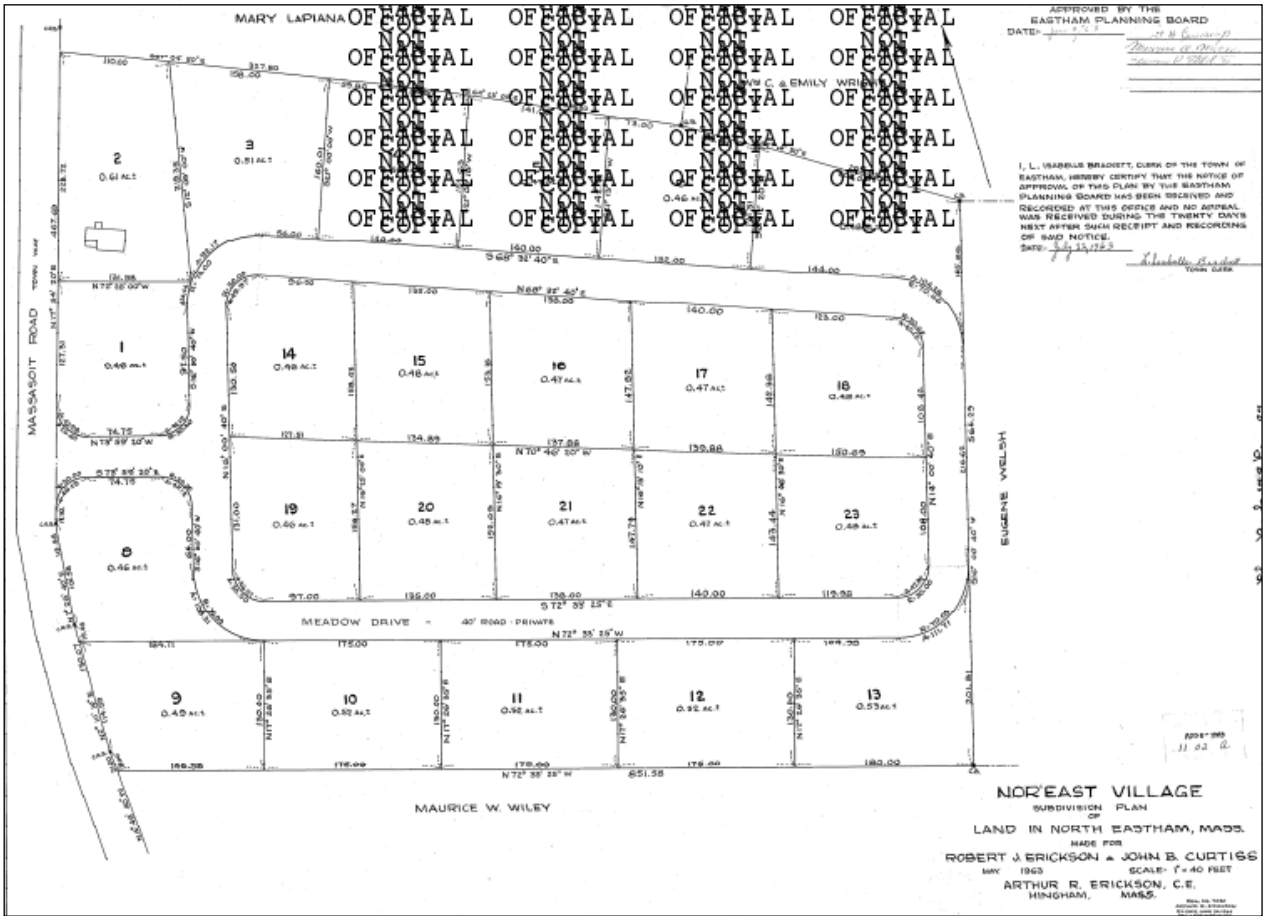
[5] Shirley N. Williams, Orleans; Arthur C. Nickerson and George S. Nickerson, Eastham, to Robert J. and Elizabeth Ann Erickson and John B. and Ruth F. Curtiss, 15 April 1963, BCD 1198:485. George Nickerson's son from his first marriage, Bernard, sold his interest in the Solomon Snow property to his father in 1950; see BCD 741:125. John B. and Ruth F. Curtiss to Edith G. Sanford, Darien CT, 4 September 1965, BCD 1311:131; Edith G. Sanford, Darien CT, to Deborah S. Campbell Owens, Massasoit Road, 6 April 1974, BCD 2024:340; Deborah S. Campbell Owens to Gordon L. Wright, Brewster, 4 May 1979, BCD 2912:4; Gordon L. and Carol L. Wright, 820 Massasoit Trail [*sic*], to Bradley R. and Amy K. Buechler, Harwich, 24 September 2004, BCD 19095:154; Bradley R. and Amy K. Buechler, 820 Massasoit Road, to Scott W. Johnson and Renee McCabe, Boca Raton FL, 20 August 2007, BCD 22332:81. The 820 Massasoit Road house is depicted on Lot 2 on "Nor'east Village Subdivision Plan of Land in North Eastham, Mass. Made for Robert J. Erickson and John B. Curtiss," May 1963, BCP 178:87.

SUPPLEMENTAL IMAGES



Plan of the Erickson/Curtiss subdivision,1963 (BCP 178:87). The house at 820 Massasoit Road is on Lot 2.

PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2019 unless otherwise noted)

View from NW.View from NW.